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THE LAYTON ART GALLERY OF MILWAUKEE

Mr. Frederick Layton of Milwaukee has built for himself a monument while still full of warm life. He need not follow the example of that gentleman who caused to be inscribed upon his portrait the legend: "Lord, keep my memory green," because Milwaukee will never forget him.

The building called "The Layton Art Gallery," on Jefferson Street, near by all that is good in the city, is built in an ornate, classical style, fine proportions, and is elaborate, though chaste, in ornamentation. The spacious galleries are well appointed and lighted, the whole making a most happy impression upon the visitor.

Naturally American art interests us most to begin with, and there are upwards of forty examples, all of the so-called "old school," if we may except George Inness, who is a product of the Barbizon group, and Harry Chase, Quartley, Wyant and Gay, who represent no new movement. The exhibition shows no example of the innovators represented by the "impressionists" of various kinds; the disciples of Whistler, Monet and the Munich "Secessionists." The people of Milwaukee are reputed conservative, and like the appellation; therefore this museum is fittingly conducted to please those for whom it exists. It is well that many pictures closely identified with early American art history should find a home somewhere. The "Hudson River School" should be honored. The painters of thirty years ago were talented men who painted according to their lights and the lights of their patrons. All painters should and must do this, as is proved in every age not excepting ours.

The largest canvas of this honorable old school is by Regis Gignoux, the Frenchman, who having accumulated his little fortune, returned to lay his bones in mother soil. It is called "New Hampshire Mountains," and the motive may have been found in any White Mountain section. One is supposed to be standing on a high shelf looking into a deep valley and out to a distance of other mountains. It is most natural and impressive. Putting aside all prejudices regarding subtle harmonies of colors or the art that strives to be simply artistic, this is a beautiful work, and it makes the spectator feel the vastness of the earth's upheaval and that he is in the midst of the wilderness. Not having seen this little rotund Frenchman's work for some years, I am surprised to observe how thoroughly it is in accord with that of all the American painters of the sixties; the same attention to details, the same niggled foliage, the same grandiose composition arranged by the same rules. It is so like that of the Harts or A. B. Durand or Thomas Cole, the father of the American branch of the

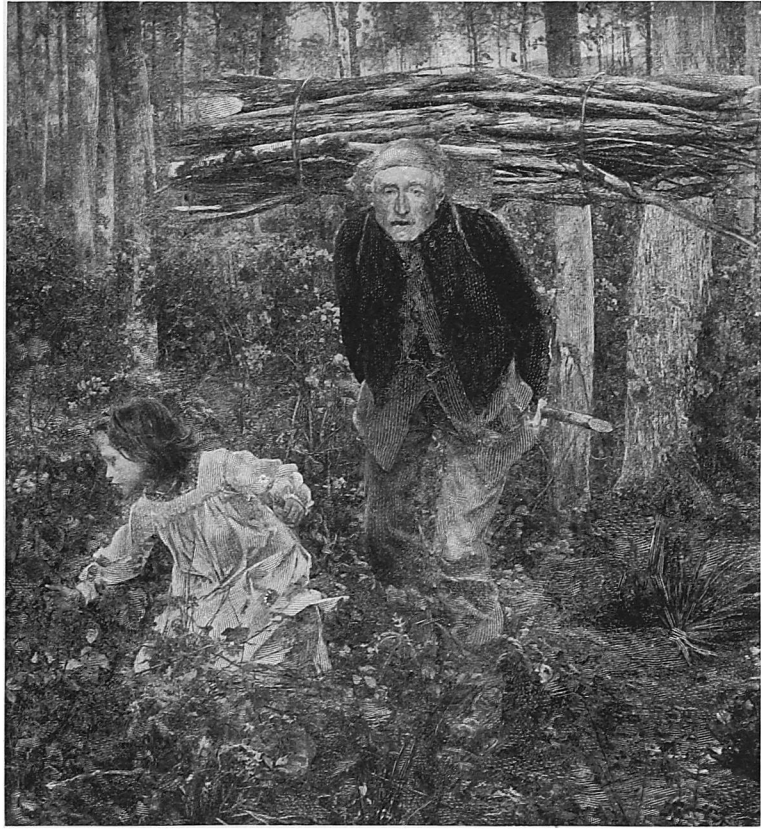
school. The foreground is crowded with tumbling brook, logs, rocks, little plants, and here is that too diminutive figure, made small in order to increase the magnitude of the cliffs. Oh! they all did it! The lighted foreground fills just one-half of the frame's front, and contrasts with the other half which is a deep, dark valley nearly unbroken; a good enough rule, but it was a rule. One wonders that a Frenchman could so take upon himself the mantle of the English painters of



INTERVIEWING THE MEMBER, BY ERSKINE NICOL

the time. It must be remembered that these rules did not originate on this side the water. All this was not, as some assert, the original American school. England got it from Italy and gave it to us. The two pictures by Vicat Cole, R. A., prove this, and almost any other old R. A.'s work will reveal the same. It is well that two pictures by Vicat Cole are here for the tracing of pedigree. Certainly a museum should be a book of history. These pictures are as usual harvest scenes—true to fact, pretty, tender in color, thin and wiry in painting and overloaded with detail, the composition following the

rule. But they are very charming, too. These two harvest pictures hang on either side of Erskine Nicol's "Interviewing the Member," a large work, elaborately finished and most true in its story-telling. A characteristic English gentleman, in red riding coat, is talking to a group of rustics. There seems to be a misunderstanding which is



THE WOOD GATHERERS, BY JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE

well expressed in the characterful faces. The steward, with quill pen in mouth, is evidently indignant because the rustics have dispute with so great a gentleman. Just above this is a very large example of the Scandinavian A. Normann's fiord scenes, a midnight sunset. The loaded paint, bold brush work, simple composition and strong color contrast strangely with Vicat Cole's timidities.

Returning to the American pictures from this study of resemblances and contrasts, we find two (placed in honor) painted by the

distinguished Hudson-Riverists, A. B. Durand and Kensett; on the way glancing at works by Bolton Jones, McCord and Wyant, who, not being of this school, are interesting for comparison, and we wonder if the Jones pictures have darkened since they left the easel. Durand, many years National Academy president, made pretty pictures, always by this old rule. Here are the big stones in the foreground, one dominating, and the brook, and the half light, half dark in front, all the details of sticks and logs and niggled foliage, and the vista of mountains. Pendant to it hangs the Kensett. He was the most talented and traveled of all this group. In this picture the Hudson is exchanged for the Lakes of Killarney, but the foreground came from the same box of studio properties and includes the tiny touches in trees and the big stone resting on the edge of the frame. But there is talent here and refined color. This picture could hang beside any other, however strong, nor suffer from the contact. The feeling of distance across the plain and the lake adds dignity to the high mountains, and these are well modeled.

A large Bastien-Lepage, "The Wood Gatherer," though large and strong, does not injure the Kensett. It is a beautiful example. Why does it look so "solid?" To use a studio phrase, why does everything "exist?" Doubtless because he painted it out of doors on the spot. Frenchmen show the drill of the school, and Bastien was—well we all know that he was a schoolman and more. A peasant bends under his burden of firewood as he walks through scattered shrubbery, the kind so often seen on the edge of a French wood, while a careless child gathers flowers—work and play, age and youth. Near by is a product of the German school by the Norwegian, L. Munthe. He commenced to paint snow scenes in Düsseldorf about 1873, having an immediate success because of originality. Here is a wide plain, under sodden snow, traversed by black, wet fences, all under a silvery sky and rising moon. Alfred Parsons, whose work illustrates charmingly one of our leading magazines, claims attention directly beside these. Framed in a most original and tasteful manner, his picture shows green slopes bordering a brooklet; the wonderful English winter green so exciting the admiration of travelers in that island of soft rain and mild frosts. A few bare fruit and forest trees contrast with this green and harmonize with the gray sky—green and gray. One feels the presence of the trained painter; the grass grows on a bank modeled by the anatomy of the earth beneath. On this wall is a pretty little Bierstadt, Rocky Mountains viewed from Colorado plains, the foreground occupied by cottonwoods and an Indian encampment on a river bank. It is "sweet" and timid. Beside it is a snow scene by Castres, a Swiss; a plain traversed by wounded men and ambulances. The Red-Cross officer seeks his route by means of a pocket map. The painting is scholarly and strong.

Genre pictures abound, such as Burton Barber's "Wake Up!"—a

child to whom a little white dog gives morning greeting, all white and flesh color; and "The Broken Bank," by Bokelmann, the Düsseldorf, and a well-known picture. The painter has quite escaped from the old legends of this school and everything is gray in tone, the stone building and gray street being in quiet tones, throwing out the dark figures. Men and women of every class are gathered with anxious faces before the doors of the defunct financial institution. The characters, the clothes and the tonality are all well treated; much better than the customers of the bank seem to have been.

"The Canterbury Pilgrims," by George H. Boughton, a six-foot long canvas, is a landscape with principal figures (about fourteen inches high only) in the foreground and many small ones beyond. The landscape is certainly very unusual in composition. It represents a wide plain over which are scattered detached bits of herbage and fruit trees in blossom. Beyond is a small walled town, past which the pilgrims are filing. In the immediate foreground are five distinct points of interest—a girl who stands by a well on extreme left, then two girls seated who have been to the well, and in the center a group of three: girl, friar and man, in good clothes; near by three more bunched together, all flanked on the extreme right by a monk praying at a shrine. To somewhat disguise this figure a blossoming tree is thrown as a veil over it. It is a really good picture, though one is inclined to cut out each group and throw away the superabundant canvas. But each painter is his own law-maker. J. G. Brown shows two nice boys in "A Cosy Corner," and in this case he has not painted "brown," as it is cool in color.

At the end of the main gallery hangs a noble canvas by Van Marcke. A solitary yellow cow stands in a meadow canal. The landscape is perfectly flat, having no background but a stormy sky. On the left a dark spot is created by means of those little canal locks so common in Holland. This picture has been frequently reproduced, but the black and white gives no idea of the full, rich tones in grass and cow. Next this superb work is, rightly, a moderately large Munkacsy. On a divan a lady and her child contemplate an armful of kittens, the old cat regarding interestedly the performance. It is similar in subject to his well-known "Two Families," though this is called "The Rivals," possibly a title not explained by the picture. The red background and rug on the floor are in contrast with a green palm and greenish portière against which the white garments show well. Luscious in color, it keeps well beside the Van Marcke, and contrasts strangely with the very gray and long time ago painted Boughton, "The Departure of the Mayflower," which hangs next it. This latter is widely known by the engraving dear to many homes.

To the left of the large Van Marcke is a Munich picture by Professor Holmberg, "The Latest Acquisition," large and minutely finished. A cardinal sits behind a table admiring an elaborately wrought cup.



THE BROKEN BANK
BY L. BOKELMANN

Everything is in the size of nature; background of picture-hung wall, books, caskets and properly rumpled tablecloth. The flesh is loosely handled, though the still life is hard and overwrought. However, this latter is a matter of taste; if well enough, then let us not dare to criticise. The cardinal red I much prefer to Vibert's, as everything is so harmonious. Over this (and why not more honorably placed?)



THE LATEST ACQUISITION, BY PROF. AUGUST HOLMBERG

is a Constable (two feet long) which, though not one of his very important works, is a fine landscape. How truly is Constable the father of the Barbizon school! Imagine a cross between Daubigny and Rousseau! Only a broadly handled spot of trees and ground against a windy sky, it has but little subject. But what a sky! what brush work! what color! Looking at this God-born painter's work I turn back to read what has been written of some other painters and find that there were laudatory adjectives used there; so let us use none here, as their commonplaceness might detract from this glory. The

delightful little Cazin next this is very like it in tone, but painted with less fling, and Mauve keeps good company, in deeper tones than we sometimes see. Quite different is a very small (nine inches) Buch-



AT THE FOUNTAIN, BY SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON, P.R.A.

binder, "The Astronomer," as finished as finished as can be; dark except for the face and gray books. A picture seven feet long, by Julien Dupré insists upon attention. The sheep, black dog and gray-coated shepherd work dark on the silver-green landscape. A senti-

ment of repose pervades the scene. It is painted for the sake of painting; a sufficient reason for doing it.

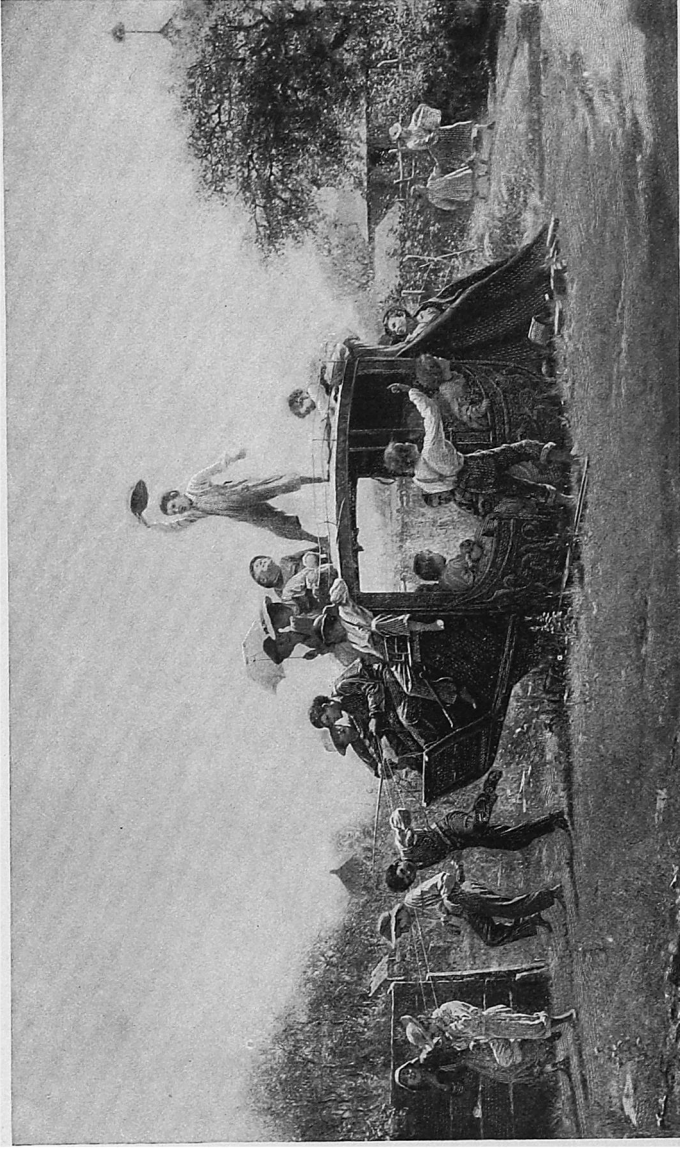
Very properly, "At the Fountain," by the late Royal Academy president, occupies the center of a wall. Compared with much of Sir Frederick Leighton's work, this example is superb. Perhaps I do wrong in making any comparisons, so good is it. Of course, those who dislike this ultra-academic style will have none of it, but that will not injure his standing. A single figure in classic costume, studiously draped, as the painter's custom was, stands against white marble. The delicately painted head and silken auburn hair (supposing it might be silk) are very simply treated, and relieved against a disturbed strip of landscape—that is, the picture is variegated above and a simple white below. As the drapery is a very pale bronzed-toned stuff without texture, and everything is light, the painter has secured his accent by means of two black classic vases, one on either side and against the white marble. One vase is draped in deep purple and the other in very dark blue. The brush work is invisible. He certainly was a master of the mechanic's art of smooth painting. The color is subtle, unusually so. It has been said of Sir Frederick that he was a musician, that he also talked Greek, and he even painted. Now for a contrast right here; an *ébauche* by Corot of considerable size. "Tone! tone!" one says. Corot's pictures were complete from the first hour's work to the last, so well did he keep them in hand. This beautiful sketch leaves nothing to be desired; more paint might not improve it. Following next is Bouguereau, with life-sized figures, "Homer and His Guides," from the salon of 1874. One rarely sees such deep tones as this in his recent work. The shadow side of the faces is decidedly dark; the blue drapery, still darker, sustains this and clears it. Altogether it reminds one of the older Munich school. Having no intention of in the slightest degree disparaging this fine work, I speak of these things from an artist's point of view and as interesting to note. I find the picture remarkably juicy and from the artist's best period. The contrast in the reposeful expression of the blind man as compared with the look of fear in the boy guide's face as he regards the fierce and threatening dogs is finely done. Beyond are naked and threatening wild men.

A good example of Schreyer's dashing horses and brown tones leads on to a picture that one sees to be Spanish at a glance, because of the quick, nervous fling of the brush, the very, very clever manipulation—a sort of butterfly touch. In this, "The Surrender of the Moors at Granada," by Pradilla, the King Ferdinand, all in red and seated on a chestnut horse red caparisoned, is just beyond Isabella, mounted on a gray charger and dressed in a green embroidered robe. All about are richly-clad attendants. Leading the opposite group is the Moor, Boabdil, in dark maroon garments, and beyond is Granada City. Next comes the largest D. Ridgway Knight that I have ever seen. It

is over eight feet long. Our American-Parisian does not always equal this in color and execution, and he certainly painted for glory this time, perhaps winning more than a little. The subject is one we know—a peasant man and two girls supposedly talking by the river-side. Now another American keeps up the dimensions. The late Arthur Quartley, marine painter, takes us out on the North River, from whence we look over a mass of gayly decked shipping (it being the Queen's birthday) to the lower part of the city of New York, which is quite correct in outlines for the date—that is, about twenty years ago. While at marines, we will look at Mesdag's big canvas, a great expanse of sky and narrow strip of water interrupted by several Dutch fishing-boats, and also a similar work in tone and composition, though more pretty and less powerful, by his pupil, Harry Chase, who promised so much when called away.

"Im Spittal Garten," nearly ten feet long, by Frithjof Smith, and in the modern Munich manner, has many excellent figures, the principal group being a family party enjoying that which we know little of—an out-of-doors meal. Several generations, from granny to infants, seem to be in no way connected with the poor invalids creeping about the background, who do not look as if they could enjoy a meal like these. The workmanship is good enough for any painter to boast of. Directly beside it is a picture by Jarves McEntee of New York, now many years dead and unknown to the present generation. It is his "The Melancholy Days Have Come," over again, reddish-brown late autumn. It is pleasant to see this old school so well housed. He was, however, never an ultra-Hudson-Riverist.

The honor place in the south gallery is given to Merle's "Beatrice and Benedick," an example of good stuff and armor painting. A woman in yellow satin talks to a man in steel cuirass and dull red tunic with fur coat, all set off by a blue gown beyond. It is a fine museum picture. Next to it we find Alma Tadema. Some one is presenting a bronze statue to many interested onlookers in various groups seated or standing in the court of a Roman house, such an one as we can reconstruct from the study of Pompeii's ruins. All that has made Tadema famous is in this picture—fine drawing and textures and good flesh. An example of the late George Inness, painted in 1890, a small, rich work, shows very dark trees and a vista with red sunset. And going on, we come to an old friend of many years ago, Eastman Johnson's "Old Stagecoach." The old red hulk is in retirement, bereft of its wheels and "down on its marrow-bones," as Verdant Greene used to say. The children play at stagecoaching, and one is driving a team of six of both sexes and colors. There are the steady ones, the kicker and the saucy black mare ready for any freak, and the passengers climb in for their imaginary journey. The painting, while not strong, is well done, and the imagination displayed calls for high praise. Space fails to speak at length of Verbockhoven's



OLD STAGECOACH
BY EASTMAN JOHNSON, N.A.



BEATRICE AND BENEDICK
BY HUGHES MERLE

silken sheep, of Baron Leys, of Blaise Desgoffe, of Jules Goupil or even of two goats by Rosa Bonheur, or of Hugo Salmson or Otto Von Thoren, or the American Frank Millet, or James Hart. Tissot has "London Visitors," and Frith is represented, and Sir John Gilbert, Thomas Hicks, Wordsworth Thompson and Edward Gay in a fine Westchester County scene. Here are Weeks, Roybet, Cæsar DeCock, Artz, Thomas Hill, Defregger, Clays, Conture, the Achenbachs both, Vollon, and so on to one hundred and sixty-four numbers, besides some good marble sculptures, among them Hiram Power's well-known "Prosperine."

Eastman Johnson's full-length portrait of Mr. Layton is a strong work, and the honored patron of this noble museum stands there for all time surveying that of which he may well be proud as we all are.

JAMES WILLIAM PATTISON.

ON SOME MINIATURES, BY MISS MARTHA S. BAKER



MISS DOROTHY VANDERPOEL

Of all objects of art and adornment in the home none finds a nearer place with the appreciative than a beautiful miniature. Unlike the life-sized portrait in oil that stares all comers in rudeness out of countenance, with the suggestive inquiry, "Who is this intruder?" the miniature invites and draws one to it, the translucent and opalescent tones fascinate and make us reluctant to remove our gaze. The ivory, warm, creamy and semi-polished, delicately glazed with dainty touch into soft transparent chromatic grays,

breathes as of some perfumed flower in the form and countenance of some fair being. The miniature, of all forms of portraiture, is the most intimate; it is for the individual; it carries with it a spell of romance from its very intimacy, and hence figures often in romantic literature and poetic lore. Miniatures have received but slight attention on the part of our artists, many claiming lack of knowledge of the requirements. The requirements artistically or intellectually in a work of art are always the same; it is technically that they vary